

Remarks

In response to the subject Office action, applicant has removed the "recording of information" step from his claims and focused them on the following educational method:

Student Centered Learning

As background on the subject invention: Educators know that active learning hinges on a student's participation in the learning process in order for it to be effective. Active learning involves both memorizing and understanding the subject matter, especially at the conceptual level. Immediate use of the subject matter in a problem solving exercise helps the student to review and synthesize the information by the performance of a task through a process that educators call synthetic integrative thinking.

The present invention

The present invention relates to a vocabulary building method applying what educators call active learning. More particularly, the present invention is an educational method for increasing a student's vocabulary by presenting interactive clues which reveal the meaning of words not known by the student, which information is then used by the student to decipher an expression containing unknown words into an expression that the student knows.

Applicant's educational method involves the following sequential steps:

(1) The teacher (i.e., maker of the puzzle) selects a first expression which is a matter of common knowledge. For instance, the name of a common known person, place, thing, event, title, phrase or quote consisting of one or more words.

Example: SPICE GIRLS (a pop music group).

(2) The teacher then translates the first expression into a second expression thereby obscuring the first expression by substituting one or more of the words with lesser known words.

Example: PUNGENT CONDIMENT SYLPHS.

(3) Next, the teacher presents the second expression to a student to decipher using the student's vocabulary knowledge of the lesser known words.

(4) Finally, the student is provided with one or more definitions of the lesser known words which words serve as clues (active learning) to aid the student in deciphering (synthetic integrative thinking) the second expression back into the first expression.

Example: First clue: A SYLPH is a slim, graceful woman or girl. If the student still does not know what the second expression refers to, he is given a second clue: A CONDIMENT is something used for seasoning food. If the student is still stumped, he is given a third clue: PUNGENT means sharp or spicy to the taste.

The Prior Art

Applicant's claims were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. patent No. 3,678,602 to Alam and by U.S. patent No. 3,935,651 to Mankoff et al. It is believed that these rejections are unsupported.

Alam discloses three decks of cards. The first deck has a word prefix printed on the front side of the card and the meaning of the prefix on the back. The second deck is similarly constructed with root words on the front and definitions on the back and the third deck has word suffixes on the front and definitions on the back.

As shown in Fig. 1, the word "pretending" is displayed on the front side of the cards (i.e., a first expression). The derivation of the word is provided on the back side - namely, "before-to stretch-conveys idea" (i.e., a second expression). The part of the word being defined is also underlined on the back side of the cards, e.g., "before" pretending, "to stretch" pretending and "conveys idea" pretending but no other information is provided.

With Alam, the student has no opportunity to apply the teaching to anything (i.e., no active learning, no synthetic integrative thinking). Use of Alam's cards merely involves memorization. Applicant's method involves four steps: selection of a first expression, construction of a second expression, presentation of

the second expression to the student and use of definition clues to aid the student in deciphering the first expression. Alam's cards simply have a first expression (pretending) and a second expression ("before-to stretch-conveys idea"). There are no added clues and there is nothing interactive for the student to do with the information, just memorize it.

Mankoff et al. discloses a deck of cards with four suits (spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs.) The face value of the card is determined by matching a word (e.g., ANTITHESIS) with its meaning (7 the opposite) selected from three choices. Hence the card is the 7 of spades.

Use of Mankoff et al.'s card merely involves memorization. As stated above, applicant's method involves four steps: selection of a first expression, construction of a second expression, presentation of the second expression to the student and use of definition clues to help the student decipher the first expression. Mankoff et al.'s cards have a first expression (ANTITHESIS) and a second expression (the opposite). The other choices on Mankoff et al.'s cards are wrong answers and there are no added clue definitions to give the student an opportunity to use the word and become actively involved. Whereas applicant's method involves both active learning and synthetic integrative thinking. The clues with the definitions allow the student to unlock the puzzle and enhance the value of the game as a mental exercise while learning vocabulary.

Commercial Success


Applicant's educational method is sold under the trademark SESQUIP and is carried by a number of newspapers. The column has been favorably reviewed:

"SEQUIP will be an instant classic. It is a challenging word game that is deserving of the company of the crossword." JIM TALENT, former U.S. Congressman and Chair of U.S. House Small Business Committee.

"If you master SESQUIP you could talk and write like William F. Buckley Jr., the man who knows and uses every word in the dictionary..." MARTIN DUGGAN, Producer and host of "Donnybrook" KETC (PBS) TV, St. Louis, Missouri.

In view of the above amendments and remarks it is believed that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



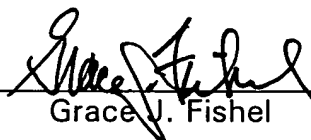
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AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on July 24, 2006.



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